



Creating Effective Presentation Slides

Being able to construct an effective presentation is a skill that will help you in your college journey. You will need to perform various presentations for your classes throughout the semester; some will be individual and others with groups. Presentation slides are an aid which allow you to present your ideas to your professor and class in a cohesive and clear manner. This handout will give you guidance on how to approach the creation of your presentation slides.

Slide Construction

Word Limitation: Strive to keep your slides clean with minimal wording

- 6x6 Rule: 6 bullet points with 6 words per bullet (maximum)
- Break up your slides if there is too much information to limit overcrowding

Slideshow Theme: Choose a theme that is appropriate for your topic and audience, and keep that theme consistent throughout your presentation.

- Slide cohesion allows for your presentation to have structure and flow.
- Keep the theme simple; you don't want it to take away from the information that you are presenting and get your audience distracted.
- The color palette of your images should be cohesive with that of your presentation; you want everything to go well together.
- Be mindful of your audience. A theme that would be appropriate in a lesson plan for kindergarteners likely wouldn't be appropriate for an academic conference.

Font Usage: Choose a font that will be easy for your audience to read.

- **Sans-serif fonts** (like Arial, Calibri, Helvetica, Lato, etc.) are usually easier to read on a screen than **serif fonts** (like Times New Roman, Georgia, Garamond, Baskerville, etc.).
- **Decorative fonts** are fine for titles, but try to keep your body text to a simple, legible font.
- Use a font size (18 +) that will be visible to your audience, and keep in mind visually impaired individuals.
- Be consistent throughout your presentation. Use the same font for all body text, keep all body text to the same size, and be consistent in your use of headings and bullet points.

Speaking and Writing Center [1]: Sans-serif fonts are fonts that do not have decorative tails at the ends of letters.

Speaking and Writing Center [2]: Serif fonts are fonts that do include small decorative tails on the ends of letters.

Speaking and Writing Center [3]: Decorative fonts include handwriting or calligraphy style fonts, block caps, or other fonts outside of the basic serif and sans-serif categories.



Visuals

Choosing Visuals: Supplemental visuals for your presentation should follow the theme. Refrain from adding in visuals that have no purpose to the point of your presentation. Visuals may be either content-related (those that directly add meaning to your presentation, such as a graph or a map) or complimentary (those that do not convey meaning but add visual interest). Both types of visuals should still be relevant to the content of your presentation.

- Ensure all visuals are of high quality. If possible, practice projecting your screen in the room you'll be presenting in to make sure images do not appear blurry when blown up to size.
- Use visuals that enhance the content on the slide or that you're presenting verbally; you don't want them to distract your audience from the purpose of your presentation.
- Make sure visuals are appropriate for the tone of your presentation and the audience you're presenting to.
- Don't overwhelm a single slide with visuals. This will distract the audience and take away from the points you are presenting.

Consider Audience: Remember the purpose and setting of your presentation can help in deciding what kinds of visuals to include.

- Informal audiences allow for cartoons or more lighthearted images whereas formal audiences only permit simple, professional visuals.
- Who is your primary audience? If your primary audience is your peers, a meme or pop-culture reference might be acceptable. If your primary audience is your professor or other academics in the field, these likely wouldn't. If you're creating a lesson plan for a much younger audience, you might not include a meme, and you wouldn't include lots of dense or difficult to decipher data either.

Accessibility

- Graphs, charts, and visual representations of data should be as large as possible and have readable fonts for your audience to make sense of the image.
- Make sure to use contrasting colors for words/images and the background color.
 - Avoid common color-blindness combos (red/green, blue/black, blue/yellow).
- Consider providing trigger warnings before showing any extremely sensitive, graphic, or explicit images.